

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15
A-01 OPR-02 CU-04 MCT-01 OC-06 CCO-00 COME-00
EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 /096 W
-----190213Z 107128 /14

R 180941Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3420
INFOR TREASURY DEPT, WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
DIA
USMISSION EC BRUSSELS
USNATO BRUSSELS 3789
OECD PARIS
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN, GERMANY
USODOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF

UNCLAS ROME 4427

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT/ELAB, IT, EFIM
SUBJ: ITALY: STRIKE PLANS AND PENDING AUSTERITY DECREE

REF: A. ROME 4147; B. ROME 3964

1. SUMMARY: IN THE WAKE OF THE STUDENT RIOTS (REF.A), ROME
PORTION OF GENERAL STRIKE WILL TAKE PLACE MARCH 23, INSTEAD OF
MARCH 18 WITH THE REST OF ITALY (REF.B). ON MARCH 18, TRANSPORT
ACTIVITY WILL PROBABLY BE RELATIVELY UNAFFECTED BY THE STRIKE:
TRAFFIC AT SOUTHERN ITALIAN AIRPORT WILL PROBABLY ONLY BE
INTERRUPTED FOR 15 MINUTES OR A HALF HOUR; THE RAIL STRIKE WILL
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BE PURELY "SYMBOLIC", WITHOUT INTERRUPTING TRAFFIC; AND MUNICIPAL
TRANSIT INTERRUPTIONS WILL BE RELATIVELY BRIEF IN MOST
LOCALES. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE GOVERNMENT AND UNIONS WILL MEET
NEXT WEEK ON AUSTERITY DECREE (FISCALIZATION OF SOCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS)
AND THAT THE GOI AND CCU MAY BE NEARING COMPROMISE SOLUTIONS.
IT IS LESS CLEAR WHAT WILL BE DONE ABOUT UNIONS' OTHER DEMAND-
INVESTMENT AND EMPLOYMENT, ESPECIALLY IN SOUTH-- WHICH HAS BECOME

A MORE BURNING QUESTION IN WAKE OF STUDENT RIOTING. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER THE HAVOC WREAKED IN ROME BY "AUTONOMOUS" STUDENT GROUPS PARTICIPATING IN MARCH 12 DEMONSTRATION MARCH (REF.A), INTERIOR MINISTER COSSIGA PROHIBITED DEMONSTRATIONS IN ROME. CGIL-CISL-UIL(CCU) ASKED EXEMPTION FOR ROME DEMONSTRATION AS PART OF ITS MARCH 18 NATIONAL STRIKE (REF.B). CCU SECGENS LAMA, MACARIO AND BENVENUTO MET WITH COSSIGA MARCH 14 AND AGREED TO POSTPONE STRIKE AND DEMONSTRATION IN ROME AND SURROUNDING LAZIO REGION UNTIL MARCH 23, WHEN COSSIGA ASSURED THEM PERMISSION TO HOLD A FIXED RALLY. CCU ANNOUNCED THAT THE STRIKE IN ROME AND LAZIO WOULD BE INCREASED FROM 4 TO 24 HOURS, WHICH WILL ALLOW WORKERS FROM THROUGHOUT LAZIO TO GATHER IN ROME FOR THE RALLY, AT WHICH ALL THREE CCU SECGENS WILL SPEAK.

3. PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS ARE THAT AIRPORTS IN SOUTH ITALY WILL ONLY BE AFFECTED BY 15 MINUTE OF HALF HOUR STRIKES ON MARCH 18, EXCEPT FOR ROME, WHERE ANY ACTION WOULD OCCUR ON MARCH 23. RAILROAD WORKERS WILL REPORTEDLY STRIKE ONLY "SYMBOLICALLY", WITHOUT AFFECTING SERVICES, AND MUNICIPAL TRANSIT WORKERS IN SOUTH ITALY WILL REPORTEDLY LIMIT STOPPAGES TO A HALF HOUR, EXCEPT PERHAPS IS A FEW SELECTED LARGER CENTERS LIKE NAPLES AND BARI, WHERE STRIKES MIGHT LAST 2 HOURS.

4. GOVERNMENT WORKERS' UNIONS HAVE DECIDED TO COMBINE THEIR PROTEST ACTION AGAINST SLOW IMPLEMENTATION OF RECENT SALARY AGREEMENTS WITH THE NATIONAL FOUR HOUR STRIKE, WHICH WILL BE GENERAL IN SOUTH ITALY AND LIMITED TO INDUSTRIAL WORKERS, PLUS GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, IN THE NORTH.

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5. THE CCU EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE WILL BE IN PERMANENT SESSION STARTING MARCH 21 TO ASSESS THE PROGRESS OF CCU MEETINGS EXPECTED TO START MARCH 21 OR 22. PRESS REPORTS INDICATE POSSIBILITIES OF A COMPROMISE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOI AND THE CCU AND ITS PARLIAMENTARY ALLIES ON THIS ISSUE (PCI, PSI AND PSDI), SPECIFICALLY, THE REPORTS SUGGESTS THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT BE WILLING TO REMOVE OR MODIFY PROVISIONS PENALIZING COMPANIES NEGOTIATING WAGE INCREASES AND THE PROVISION EXCLUDING VALUE ADDED TAX (IVA) INCREASES FROM CALCULATION OF COST-OF-LIVING ESCALATOR INCREASES, IF THE UNIONS AGREE TO AN ALTERNATIVE EFFECTIVE WAY TO RESTRAIN COMPANY-LEVEL WAGE DEMANDS. IN RETURN, THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE UNIONS MAY BE WILLING TO MAKE MINOR MODIFICATIONS IN THE ESCALATOR "BASKET" (URBAN TRANSIT AND NEWSPAPERS). PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION OF THE DECREE IS GETTING UNDERWAY.

6. DURING THE MEETINGS NEXT WEEK, THE CCU WILL ALSO CONTINUE PRESSING THE GOI FOR INCREASED INVESTMENT AND EMPLOYMENT

MEASURES, PARTICULARLY IN SOUTH ITALY. THE ROME AND BOLOGNA STUDENT RIOTS HAVE GIVEN INCREASE URGENCY TO THIS QUESTION, SINCE LACK OF EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS IS A MAJOR SOURCE OF STUDENT UNHAPPINESS, AND THE CCU HAS MADE INVESTMENT AND EMPLOYMENT IN THE SOUTH THE PRINCIPLE FOCUS OF THE MARCH 18 AND 23 STRIKES, AND APPEALED TO STUDENTS TO JOIN THE WORKERS IN PRESSING THIS ISSUE. THE CCU HAS CRITICIZED THE GOI FOR OFFERING NO NEW INITIATIVES FOR INCREASED INVESTMENTS OR EMPLOYMENT DURING THE SECTORAL GOI-CCU TALKS OVER THE LAST TWO MONTHS. THERE ARE NO PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS AS TO HOW THE GOI AND CCU MIGHT RESOLVE THIS ISSUE.BEAUDRY

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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
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Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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